



**GRACE COVENANT**  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

# Lent Devotionals 2021

By Harold B. Frye

## February 16 Shrove Tuesday

**1 Corinthians 10:31 "So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."**

"This day is for feasting:  
for eating, not wasting,  
for chewing and tasting  
all that God makes!  
This day is for singing:  
our ears will be ringing,  
with songs we are bringing  
to God - full of praise!

Sing a song of praise!  
Bring eggs for the baking  
add flour to the making  
and stir up the cake in  
a bowl nice and big!  
Add milk to the bowl  
then stir with your soul,  
and cook 'til it's whole -  
and eat all you can!

Eat!  
Tomorrow's for praying,  
for silently saying  
to God that you're laying  
your life down in love.  
To wait on God's giving  
God's food for your living,  
God's grace, all forgiving,  
as Easter comes near.....

Silent prayer  
God's blessing for sharing,  
for hoping, for caring.  
God's life we are bearing  
for us and the world!

The United Reformed Church of the United Kingdom

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rnM26ymoghc>

## February 17 Ash Wednesday

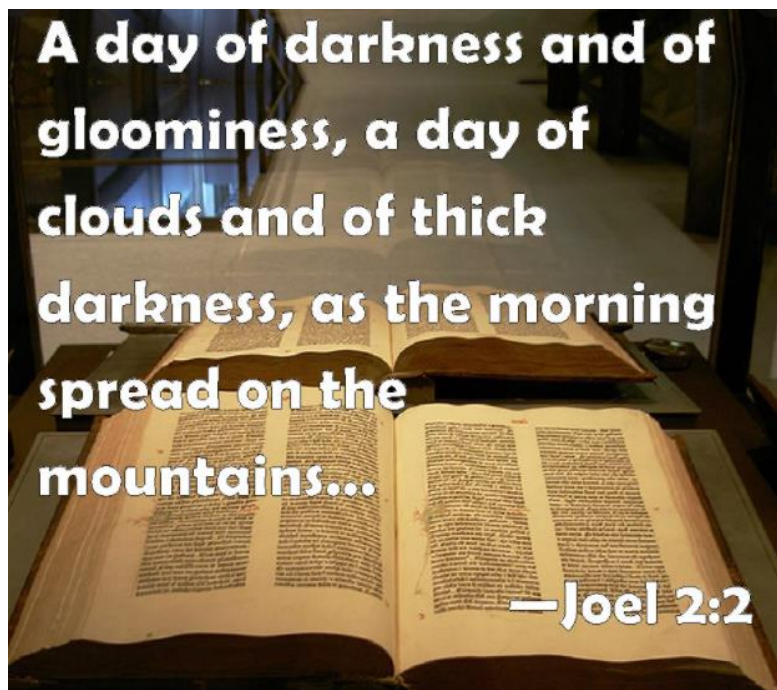
**Joel 2:2 “It is near – a day of darkness and no light, a day of clouds and thick darkness! Like blackness spread out upon the mountains, a great and powerful army comes, unlike any that has ever come before them or will come after them in centuries ahead.”**

If you follow movies in the war genre, you may recall “Inglorious Basterds” starring Brad Pitt. His character led a small band of American Army Jews who struck fear among the German Nazi soldiers through their intimidation and willful assassinations of officers and soldiers. A few were allowed to live to help spread the stories of their attacks but were marked with a swastika carved into their foreheads that marked them for life as part of the horror that was the Nazi calamity. The swastika was permanent.

Christians find ways to be marked on their foreheads with the cross. Ashes are used as a symbol of humility to begin the Lenten season. Because of the pandemic, many will forego in-person Ash Wednesday services; however, whether the cross is placed on the forehead or only remembered from previous years, the cross is a permanent reminder that we carry the sacrifice of Jesus throughout our lives.

I carry the cross with me always. Amen.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VekYPnf3duM>



## February 18 2<sup>nd</sup> Day of Lent

**Joel 2:13** “Tear your hearts and not your clothing. Return to the Lord your God, for he is merciful and compassionate, very patient, full of faithful love, and ready to forgive.”

Lost and found. The sorrowful end place of many articles of clothing in school. Middle schoolers more than any other age seem to lose coats and jackets at a dizzying rate. It took a while around them to figure out their game. Coats that ended up in the school’s lost-and-found closet weren’t really lost to their owners. I learned that many of these students just wanted a new coat, so they conveniently “lost” the old one. Attempting to clear out the collection, I displayed these items at an open house and was amazed at how students innocently denied any knowledge of the existence of a school lost and found closet to their parents, many times while dressed in a new coat. Most parents had forgiven their children and, at least in front of the principal, demonstrated compassion.

As the Lenten season begins and our hearts open to the coming sacrifice of the Savior, know that God is compassionate and forgiving, not expecting that we show outward signs of remorse and grieving; rather, turn inward by opening up to the sins and shortcomings that tarnish our lives.

I search for forgiveness, my God. Amen.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VWAKv2qhM2c>



**February 19 3<sup>rd</sup> Day of Lent**

**Isaiah 58:10 “If you open your heart to the hungry, and provide abundantly for those who are afflicted, your light will shine in the darkness, and your gloom will be like the noon.”**

Before the pandemic struck, pockets of poverty in our community were addressed through efforts to provide meals to those in need. Now, the numbers of those in need have increased so dramatically and the challenge to deliver meals in social distanced settings has changed processes. So many volunteers are stepping up whether through food pickup stations, delivery to the elderly and shut-ins, or school distribution of food to students and families. During this time of darkness and cold, finding ways to be involved in one of these efforts will bring a glow to your heart that is like no other. As the next verse in this Isaiah passage says, “The Lord will guide you continually.” Find a way to shine.

My heart reaches out to those in need with Your help, my Lord. Amen.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UB0-ZLzhnY>



February 20 4<sup>th</sup> Day of Lent

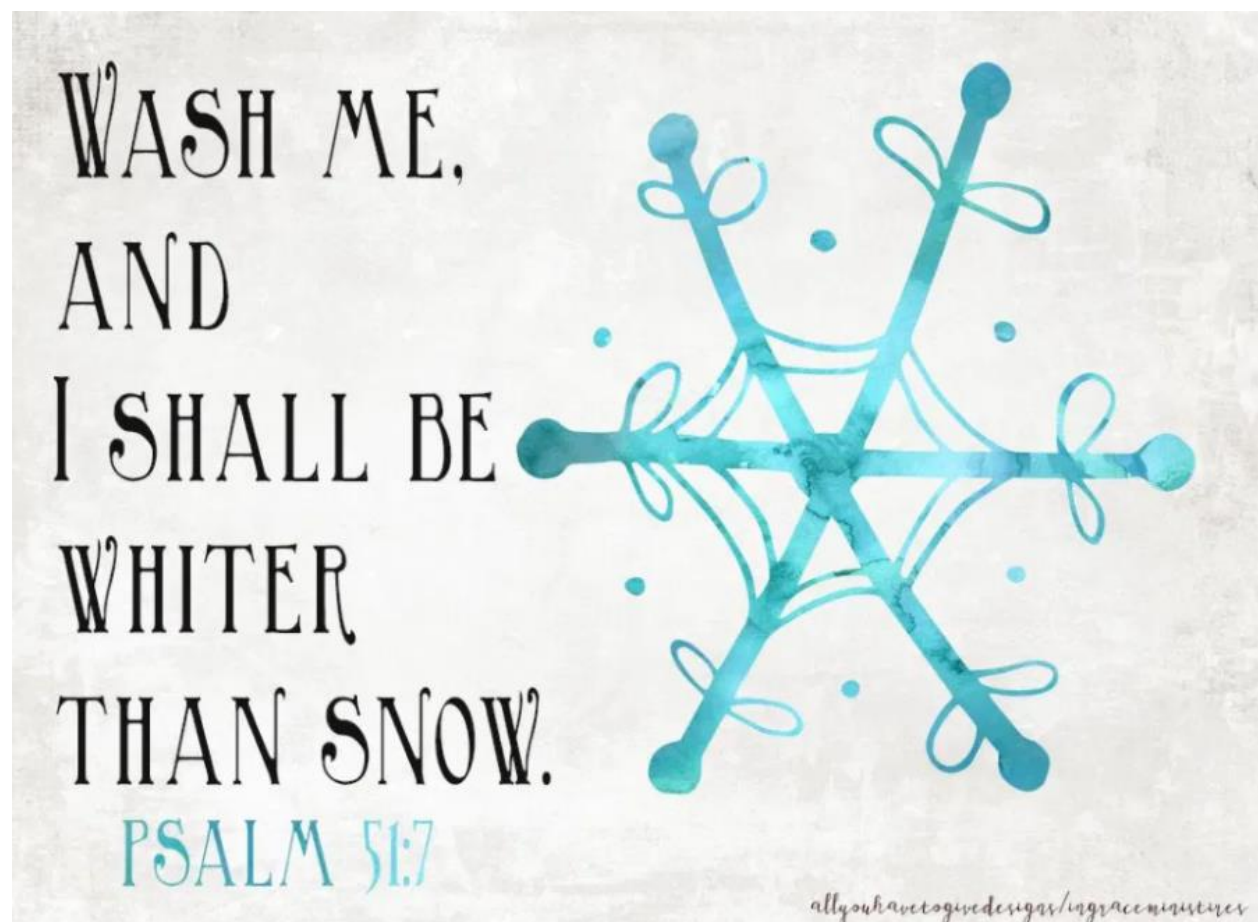
**Psalm 51:7 “Purify me with hyssop and I will be clean; wash me and I will be whiter than snow.”**

A favorite book of mine is “900 Miles from Nowhere,” the stories of pioneers and settlers who traveled west to stake claims to land in Nebraska, Kansas, and Oklahoma. The book’s contents are mostly photos, those grainy pictures that were likely taken by a traveling photographer who preserved these scenes for history. Most of the photos were taken of families posing in front of their humble abodes, many of them sod huts. Their faces are visibly dirty and their clothes appear to be disheveled for lack of washing. Baths were not possible and washing up for supper was not a common practice. How different those times than now when we are reminded to wash our hands several times a day!

How does the Psalmist ask that God “wash me?” It’s not about the cleanliness of the body, but, rather, the cleanliness of the soul. Admitting one’s sins and asking God for forgiveness brings purity of the soul. Sin is likely and redemption is possible.

Of course, the fragrant smell of hyssop wouldn’t have hurt the condition of those early settlers.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0lvXA0yRDwY>



**February 22 5<sup>th</sup> Day of Lent**

**2 Corinthians 5:20 “So we are ambassadors who represent Christ. God is negotiating with you through us. We beg you as Christ’s representatives, “Be reconciled to God!”**

When I was part of the administration’s negotiating team sitting across the table from the teachers’ team, I never thought of myself as an ambassador. I don’t know what comes to mind when you hear that term, perhaps, a diplomat from the State Department? An individual dressed smartly in black tie with a wide and colorful ribbon crossing the chest from shoulder to waist? A person who visits a foreign government to work out terms of a pact? Surely, I was none of those. In fact, as conflict often lurked at the edges of each meeting, I was somewhat intimidated by my position on the team that represented the board of education.

Now we have Paul who represents himself as God’s ambassador, present to negotiate with the people of Corinth. There likely can’t be any higher level of ambassadorship than his. He urges the people to accept God and believe in the message brought by Christ. They are asked to be prepared to accept the terms and conditions God offers to them. And those terms? To unite in harmony as God’s people.

Seems simple enough.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=etR7Bja7xus>

Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ,  
God making his appeal through us. We  
implore you on behalf of Christ,  
be reconciled to God.

2 Corinthians 5:20 ESV  
tbv



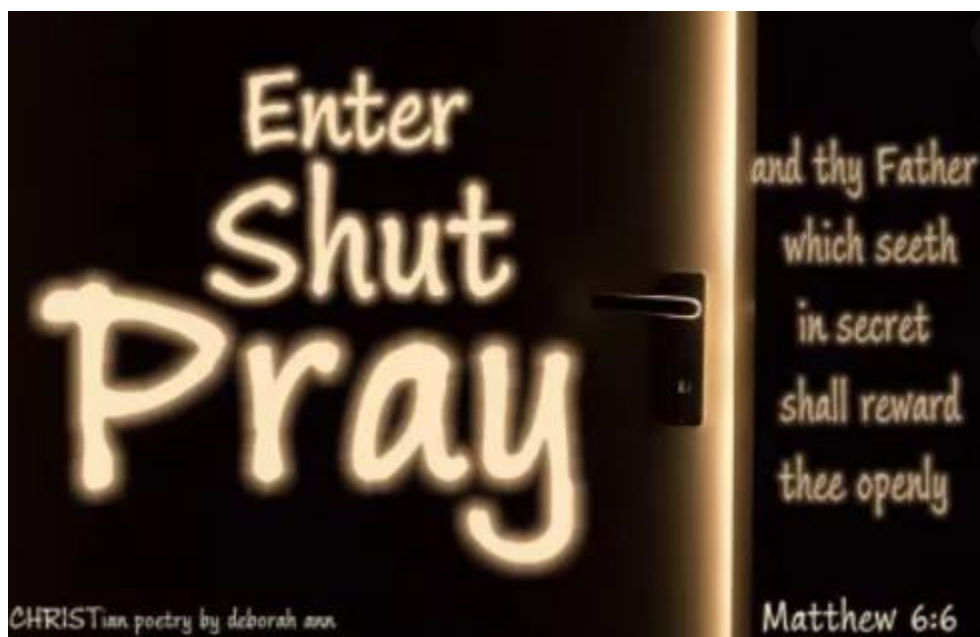
**February 23 6<sup>th</sup> Day of Lent**

**Matthew 6:6** “But when you pray, go to your room, shut the door, and pray to your Father who is present in that secret place. Your Father who sees what you do in secret will reward you.”

Growing up at First Presbyterian Church in Kansas City, Kansas, our pastor maintained a study, a hideaway where he could concentrate on reading, praying, and writing his next sermon. As a boy, I thought that was a really cool idea, so cool that when I became a principal, I cleaned out an old broom closet and shoved an old desk and lamp in the cramped space. My secretary always knew where I was in case of emergency. Over the years, I was able to, in just a short amount of time, write schedules for the following week, agendas for faculty meetings, letters to parents, and so much more. The absence of interruption allowed me time to think clearly.

This passage suggests that, whatever the format or structure of our prayers, they should be done in the absence of distraction, in a quiet place where conversations with God aren't interrupted by outside interferences, where the content of the prayer is all that matters.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1nq5AyLlfk>





## February 24 7<sup>th</sup> Day of Lent

**Matthew 6:14** “If you forgive others their sins, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you don’t forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your sins.”

Samuel L. Jackson and Tommy Lee Jones starred in the 2000 movie, “Rules of Engagement.” Jackson’s character portrayed a decorated Marine veteran in battle in Vietnam and later in Desert Storm where his decisions brought him to trial with a charge of murdering protesters at the U.S. Embassy. A key witness brought by the prosecution was a former commander of the North Vietnamese army who was released from captivity in their earlier meeting and then, during the trial, appeared on the stand to testify against the Marine. One of the last scenes in the movie was of the former NVA leader giving the Marine a salute in the parking lot outside the courtroom. That salute was a sign of his forgiveness for all that had occurred in the war battle decades before.

We don’t know the sins of others, but we do know of our own. As much as we might like to ignore our own, we know that God knows of them. Little does it matter what others have done to us; rather, and more importantly, our forgiveness of what they have done makes it right between ourselves and God. There is power in forgiving. There is also peace in forgiving.

Dear God, give me the strength to forgive. Amen.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FEOLBShCnhI>



## February 25 8<sup>th</sup> Day of Lent

**Genesis 9:12** “God said, ‘This is the symbol of the covenant that I am drawing up between me and you and every living thing with you, on behalf of every future generation.’”

The symbolism of the rainbow. We celebrate seeing one in the sky overhead. We attach meanings for good luck, good fortune, and inclusiveness to the rainbow. Kids splash the colors of rainbows across paper.

What confounds me about this passage in the Lenten season is not what it says, but what some choose to say and believe that counters the meaning. The scripture says “between me (God) and you (Noah) and every living thing (people, animals, etc.).” Some attempt to exclude based on race, ethnicity, sexual orientation while God’s covenant is with “every living thing.”

Keeping in mind scripture from previous days regarding forgiveness, search the skies for rainbows and ask God’s forgiveness if your actions and words have not been aligned with God’s desire for inclusiveness.

May I value every living thing. Amen.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9RfQkK5jNBU>



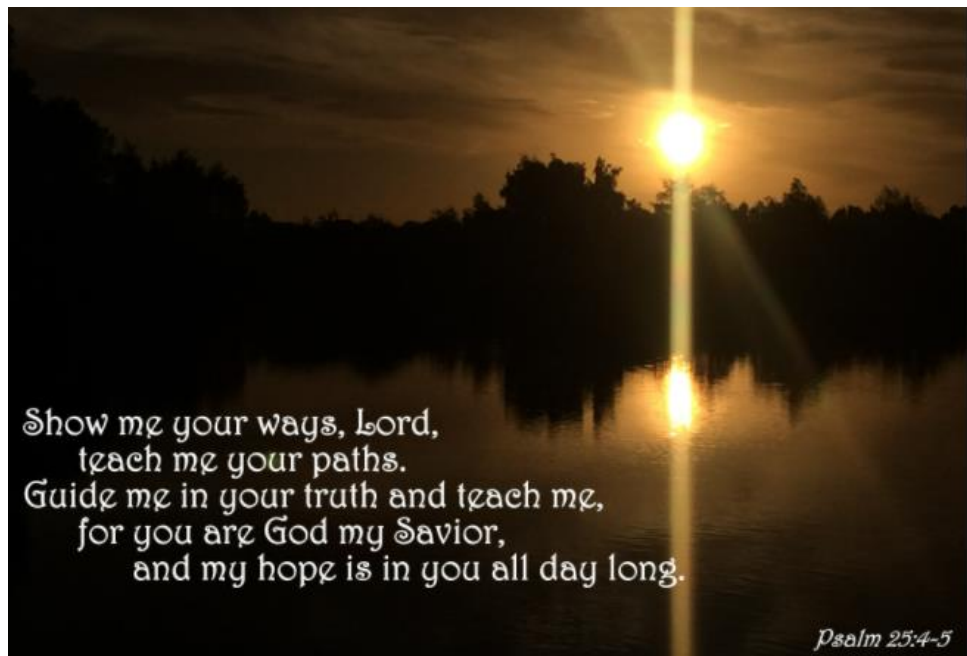
## February 26 9<sup>th</sup> Day of Lent

### Psalm 25:5 "I put my hope in You all day long."

When this scripture appeared in this year's Lenten lectionary, one of the first things that came to mind was the saying, "All hope is gone." Thanks to the internet, I entered that phrase and was quite surprised to learn that it is a common phrase linked to a heavy metal band, "Slipknot." Not being a heavy metal fan, I searched further and found (not surprisingly) that Slipknot's performances were described as "chaotic," "aggressive," and "energetic." The images of the band fit those descriptions with the use of ugly masks and dark apparel. The more I thought, the closer became the connection with "all hope is gone." Memories of sitting by the bedside of a loved one, hoping for some small sign of an upturn in his condition, I recall thoughts of refusing to give in to losing hope. Hope sustained that vigil. Hope continued even after death that the promise of eternal life was realized.

Hope is not gone.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tGgjXRNpo9A>



February 27 10<sup>th</sup> Day of Lent

**1 Peter 3:20 “Noah built an ark in which a few lives were rescued through water. Baptism is like that. It saves you now—not because it removes dirt from your body but because it is the mark of a good conscience toward God.”**

Years ago, a few churches conducted baptisms at Big Eleven Lake, a small pond adjacent to the Kansas State School for the Blind in Kansas City, Kansas. The lake then and now is encircled by a stone wall, grassy picnic areas, and an octagonal stage-like area jutting out into the water, facing several rows of bleacher seats. Coming from a church background that delivered baptismal waters by sprinkling, I was fascinated by the dunking method and, on a few occasions, was privileged to witness a few baptisms when a minister waded out into the water with the individual to carry out the ritual. Not until much later in life did I appreciate the connection to John’s baptizing of Jesus and others in the River Jordan. Those full immersion experiences seemed to me to be the total commitment.

Throughout the Bible, references to water are abundant. And, as with Noah, water was a symbol God used to signal refinement of the God-man bond. If you were baptized, either as an infant or young adult or even later in life, take a few minutes to reflect on what your own baptism has meant to your life. Did it clear the way for your conscience to remain open with Him?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GcLeXdi2zQw&t=28s>



## March 1 11<sup>th</sup> Day of Lent

**Mark 1:10** “While He was coming up out of the water, Jesus saw heaven splitting open and the Spirit, like a dove, coming down on Him.”

As I reflected on yesterday’s scripture, I also couldn’t wait to get on to this one. I have witnessed only a few full immersion baptisms in my life and more recently was delighted to see a young boy about ten or eleven years old being baptized at a Pentecostal church. As the minister brought him back up out of the water, the boy gained a foothold in the baptismal font, thrust his arms into the air, and gave out with a loud shout of praise and thanks. How unlike that was than in our infant sprinkling practice in which the parents hope their baby doesn’t cry or make other noises they would consider inappropriate. Knowing this scripture passage when I saw that young boy’s reaction, I pictured a dove in my mind descending on him from heaven, for he had been washed and cleansed. His baptismal experience undoubtedly will remain vivid for the rest of his life.

Oh, that we remember our own baptism and turn to God.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vDLbka\\_5awQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vDLbka_5awQ)



## March 2 12<sup>th</sup> Day of Lent

### Genesis 17:2 “I will give you many, many descendants.”

God made a covenant with Abraham that he would be the father of many nations. Have you ever stopped to think how many people were involved just so that you would be born? Of course, you have 2 parents, 4 grandparents, and 8 great grandparents. But the exponential growth explodes from that point. As you can see, the pattern is that each generation doubles that of the previous one. Therefore, if you were able to trace your ancestry to the 10<sup>th</sup> generation as we have done with the Frye DNA, the number increases to 4096! Likely that Heinrich Frey who migrated from Alsace to Philadelphia in 1685 thought at all he would beget an ancestral line involving pairs and pairs and pairs of parents that came down to my birth. And, of course, Heinrich’s offspring were more numerous than a single son. He was the proud father of several children which only increases greatly the number of cousins. Abraham probably couldn’t believe that God could cause him at age 90 to become a father, much less to be a father to nations.

So, why is it important in 2021 that we think about ancestry and future generations during Lent? For me, it takes me back to Heinrich Frey who emigrated because of persecution to his Protestant beliefs, to his desire to worship God without the interference of the French monarchy and church.

I desire to be as strong in my beliefs.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mFqN-M6FN6o>



### March 3 13<sup>th</sup> Day of Lent

**Genesis 17:16 “...and kings of peoples will come from her.”**

Royal succession is an interesting topic for research. Within the lineage of the monarchies of England alone, there are mysteries, love stories, betrayals, assassinations, and much more. Consider Charles I, a king who sat on the throne from 1625-1649 and, unfortunately, lost his head when protests regarding the Parliament led by Oliver Cromwell briefly interrupted successors to rule over the Empire.

Sarai was different. She wasn't a descendent of royalty. Her advanced age predicted that her barren life would end soon. But God had a plan. He considered Sarai so special that he renamed her Sarah and Abram became Abraham. The son God promised them would be the start of a lineage that would lead to King David and, ultimately, to Jesus, Savior of the World. His redeemer status would not come from sitting on a throne; instead, it would be in death on a cross and resurrection to Heaven.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NdqrwGJYePQ>



## March 4 14<sup>th</sup> Day of Lent

**Psalm 22:17 “I will praise you in the very center of the congregation.”**

My sons were a part of the Boy Scout troop at what was then Valley View United Methodist Church. For various reasons, the church is now a part of the Church of the Resurrection network. One of the features of the building that I always enjoyed was the sanctuary which was a theater-in-the-round. A raised platform in the center of a lowered floor that sloped to that point was fully surrounded by pews. I attended a few services there, especially on Scout Sunday, and was always interested in how the minister addressed the congregation, often pacing around on the platform, turning so that his back wasn't always to any one section. We used the platform to our advantage when we conducted Eagle Scout courts of honor as the platform was bordered by a short railing on which scouts would place a lantern that was moved from one point to another around the perimeter as part of the ceremony.

Unlike this sanctuary-in-the-round, Psalmist David promised to place the Messiah at the center of the church. The sanctuary only physically represents what was in David's heart and what should be in the heart of everyone who believes in the Christ. For most of us, that will require that we move out of the center of our lives those unimportant things that we allow to dominate our lives.

Can you do it? Can I?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lsFLrvzZIF8>





## March 5 15<sup>th</sup> Day of Lent

**Romans 4:20 “...but he grew strong in faith and gave glory to God.”**

“October Sky” is a 1999 movie cast in Coalwood, West Virginia, in which 4 young boys become interested in rocket science after they see Sputnik’s light trail across the night sky. They go on to create and design a critical piece of what would become a model for NASA rockets. The film’s main character, Homer Hickam, sees himself and his future beyond that of the coal mines in which his father works as a supervisor. His father doesn’t think much of Homer’s ambitions for rocketry. At one point, Homer misses his shift in the mines and his father encourages that he contact the foreman to make it right.

In this longer passage from Romans, Paul urges followers to grow in their faith and enter into a “right relationship” with God. Paul explains that such faith is based, not on law, but on belief. That belief, that God’s promise to Abraham, was the basis of Abraham’s faith that God could and would deliver on His promise. No laws were needed, for laws would only bring about disappointment. Instead, faith comes from grace, a gift from God.

Homer Hickam had faith that a vision of the future would bring about greater possibilities.

What does your faith’s vision bring?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dNwt7LQiyck>



## March 6 16<sup>th</sup> Day of Lent

### Mark 8:31 “Then Jesus began to teach His disciples.”

A good friend took on a teaching assignment during the Advent season at his church. As we talked about it, I became aware that, like most who have not completed a teacher education program, he would approach the online course much as he had been taught, indeed as a graduate of a Big Ten university. He would fill much of the hour-long sessions with lecture, parroting what was provided in the curriculum. When I asked him about how he would go about determining if participants understood any part of the material, he said that he would call on one of them and ask a question from the teacher’s guide. Reverting to my own teacher training, I advised him to ask the question first, pause a few seconds, then call on someone if there wasn’t a volunteer. By following his protocol, he was excusing everyone except the person he picked out. By following my protocol, he would cause everyone to think about a response.

Jesus, the Master Teacher, had His own challenges. In Mark’s recounting of Jesus’ prediction of death, Peter raises doubt that Jesus is correct. As any good teacher would do, Jesus confirms that He is correct and adds further evidence and direction by saying, “All who want to come after Me, must say no to themselves, take up their cross, and follow Me” (v. 34).

As the Lenten season progresses and we draw near to the time when Jesus was crucified, are you ready to take up a cross and follow Him?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j9WpmnFJHuo>



## March 8 17<sup>th</sup> Day of Lent

### Mark 9:6 “He said this because he didn’t know how to respond.”

Believe it or not, but the cliché “putting your foot in your mouth” has been portrayed in emoji and meme forms. One of my favorites resonates with me: “Some things are better left unsaid which I generally realize right after I have said them.” These words are imposed over a caricature of Kermit the Frog, known for his misspoken or misplaced responses. I also suffer from wishing I had said something after I said something lame or ineffective.

Jesus had taken a few disciples up on the mountain where they witnessed His transformation and conversation with Elijah and Moses. Imagine how you and I would react. Peter, as his usual self, spoke about building shrines for each. His was a response born from fear. The disciples were, as we would have been, terrified by what they had seen.

Oftentimes, it might be best to watch without speaking.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8kvFtXphmMU>



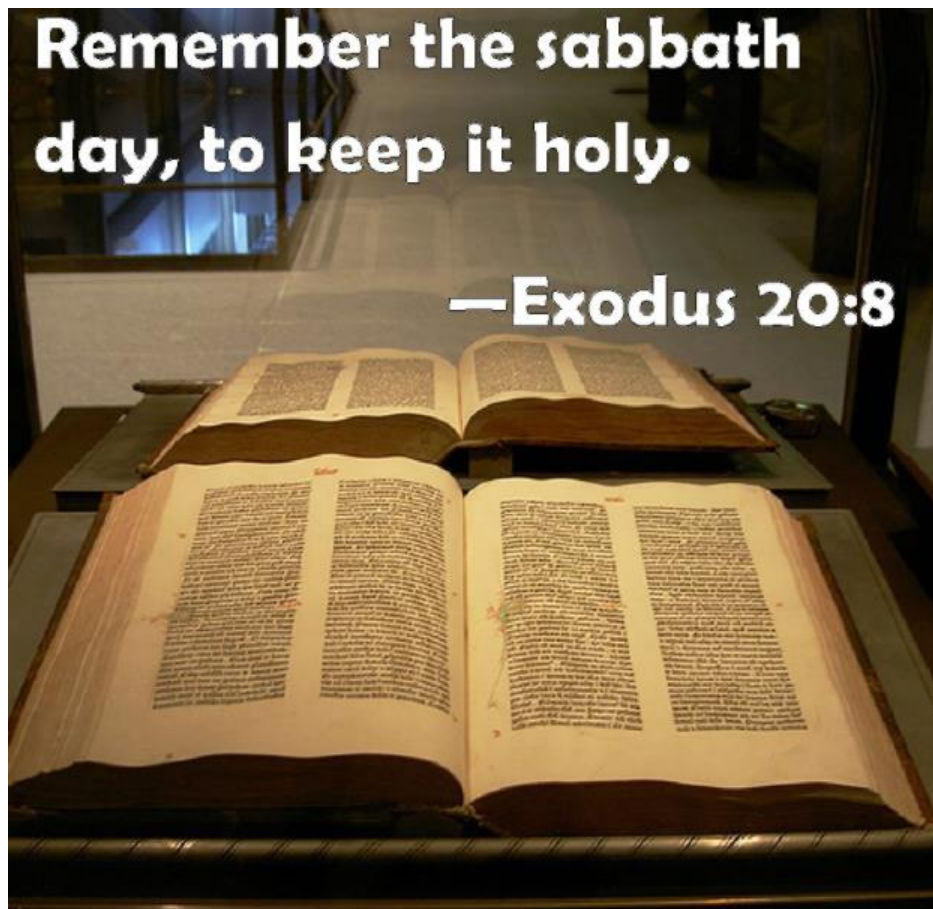
**March 9 18<sup>th</sup> Day of Lent**

**Exodus 20:8 “Remember the Sabbath day and treat it as holy.”**

You may know of Corporal Desmond Doss, a WWII conscientious objector who served as a combat medic. Doss turned down a deferment as a ship builder to join the Army and do his part in the war against the aggression of the Axis powers. His journey started out with harassment, intimidation, and threats for his refusal to carry a weapon. He also regularly applied for weekly leave to carry out his beliefs as a member of the Seventh Day Adventist Church. All that took personal courage and was brought to a halt when his unit was sent to Guam and the Philippines. In battle after battle, Corporal Doss proved his bravery by treating wounded soldiers on the battlefield. In the engagement with Japanese forces known at the Maeda Escarpment, popularly referred to as Hacksaw Ridge, Doss was able to get 75 of his wounded comrades to the edge of the escarpment and down to safety. For these actions, President Truman awarded him the Medal of Honor.

Corporal Desmond Doss accomplished what few others could. He remained steadfast in his faith, even when others belittled him. His actions provide one of the truest examples of heroism and, more importantly, one of the most sincere illustrations of faith.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SJ8AWkhKWYI>



## March 10 19<sup>th</sup> Day of Lent

### Psalm 19:5 “...it thrills at running its course.”

You may not be familiar with Roberta Gibb, whose name isn't a common household name. Roberta was the first woman to run the Boston Marathon. She did so first in 1966 and repeated her feat in 1967 and 1968, each time without registering. As no surprise, there was great conflict of opinion about women competing in the 26.2 mile event. The second year of Roberta's run in 1967, Katherine Switzer officially entered and ran the race. Athletes who prepare for this grueling event aren't as concerned about winning; rather, it's the thrill at running the course.

Psalmist David describes the Sun running its course across the sky. From dawn until dusk, the Sun runs its course, providing all the benefits that it does to the Earth. Some compare the course Jesus took from His place in Heaven to run His course until His return to Heaven.

At near the midpoint of the Lenten season, we are thrilled at the course Jesus has taken.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HDh8oG6MNaU>



## March 11 20<sup>th</sup> Day of Lent

**1 Corinthians 1:18 The message of the cross is foolishness to those who are being destroyed. But it is the power of God for those of us who are being saved."**

If you are familiar with the story of the Huguenot emigration from France to other countries during the 1600s, you may also be familiar with the Huguenot cross. Unlike the Christian cross, a simple symbol characterizing the cross on which Jesus was crucified, the Huguenot cross is complex. Around the Maltese cross are 8 points representing the Beatitudes. Between the arms of the cross are fleur de lys, each with 3 petals for a total of 12 representing the disciples. Heart shapes also can be seen below each fleur de lys representing loyalty and the seal of the French reformer, John Calvin. Suspended from the cross is a dove symbolizing the Holy Spirit. The Huguenots left France after Louis XIV renounced the Edict of Nantes put in force by his predecessor, Henri VI in 1598. As Protestants, Huguenots were persecuted if they did not convert to the Catholic faith. The Church of England was also undergoing a similar attack, making it unsafe for Huguenots to remain in either country.

Symbols are important to believers. Just as the traditional cross reminds us of Jesus' sacrifice for our sins, the Huguenot cross reminded followers that their faith should remain above all else.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6ZurdjW3Zts>



## March 12 21<sup>st</sup> Day of Lent

**John 2:19** “Jesus answered, ‘Destroy this temple and in three days I’ll raise it up.’”

Basilica de la Sagrada Familia in Barcelona is scheduled to be completed in 2026. What is amazing about this structure is that construction began more than 133 years ago! The architect, Antoni Gaudi, died in 1926. Some delays were experienced during the Spanish Civil War. Gaudi’s design combined Gothic and curvilinear Art Nouveau forms. Visitors can purchase tickets from 30 to 95 Euros that include a variety of experiences. Needless to say, the Basilica has experienced a range of opinions and some conflicts over its appearance and presence. A planned high speed railway underground threatens the stability of the structure.

Jesus was incensed by the activities taking place in the temple. He cast aside moneychangers, stalls in which goods were being sold, and drove sellers and animals out. When challenged by the priests, He replied that the temple should be destroyed. They were astonished and told Him construction had taken many years. Jesus amazed them with His reply; He would rebuild it in three days. We know that He was referring to the three days from crucifixion to resurrection and not about an actual temple. His would become the new church, a growing body of followers that would spread around the globe.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ztZ8WL4Jm1c>

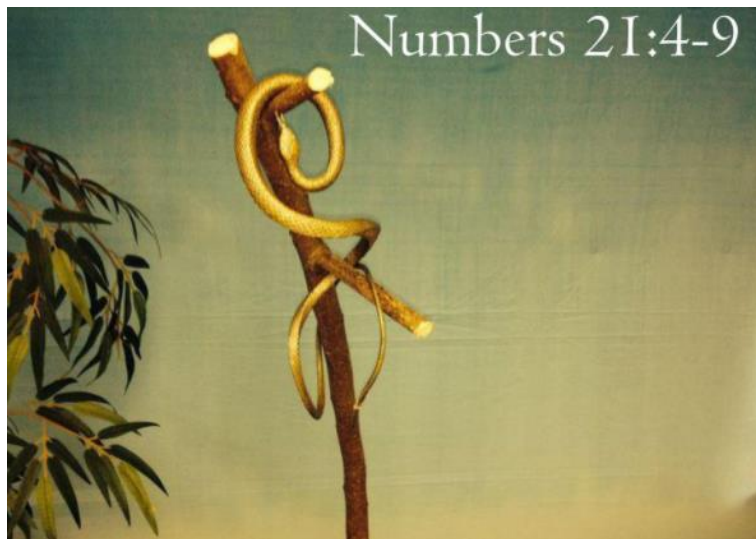


**March 13 22<sup>nd</sup> Day of Lent**

**Numbers 21:9 “...If a snake bit someone, that person could look at the bronze snake and live.”**

It's just that simple. Jesus died to save us from our sins. The ultimate sacrifice! And what does He want in return? Believe. Just believe in Him. God answered the Israelites' plea when He first sent snakes to bite them (sin) and they died. Then He answered Moses' prayer and made redemption so simple. Just look upon the bronze snake and live. It's just that simple.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-DID-zlZomc>





March 15 23<sup>rd</sup> Day of Lent

**Psalm 107:1 "Give thanks to the Lord because He is good, because His faithful love lasts forever."**

How many times have we said, "I will love you forever!" For those who have stated marriage vows, that word "forever" may have been a part of the script. Personally, I wonder what forever really means? I know my life has an endpoint and my relationship will end with those with whom I have vowed to love forever. Perhaps, there is more to forever than my simple mind includes. Through Jesus' death and resurrection, the promise of eternal life in Heaven is available to all believers. Eternal = Forever. God's love is faithful and God's love lasts forever.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e9u\\_MhjETLg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e9u_MhjETLg)

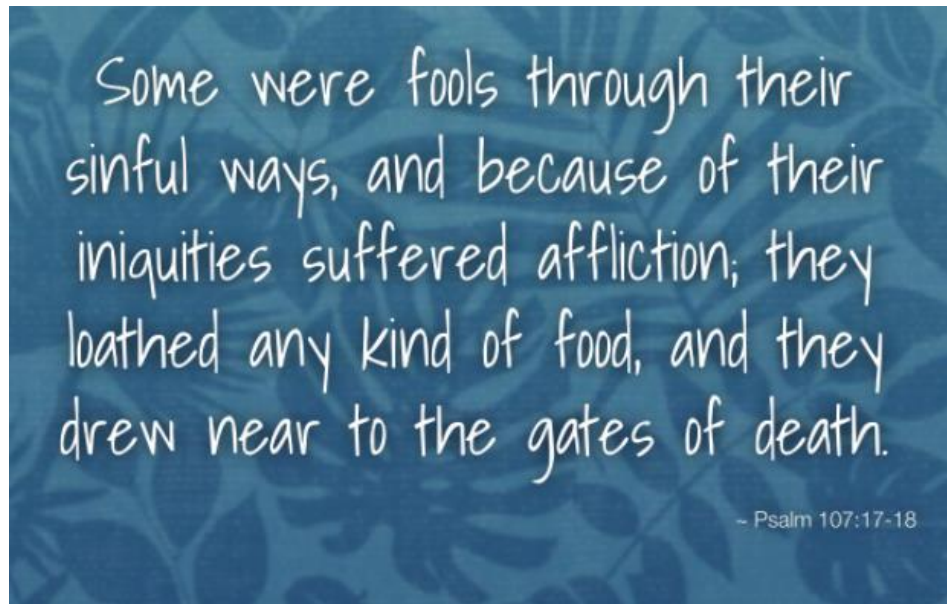


**March 16 24<sup>th</sup> Day of Lent**

**Psalm 107:18 “They had absolutely no appetite for food; they had arrived at death’s gates. So they cried out to the Lord in their distress and God saved them from their desperate circumstances.”**

Our time will come. For each and every one of us, death will take us from this world. Are there any assurances that God won't forget me? Will my sinful life cause rejection and denial to eternal life? God promises He will save us, even at the last moments. We need only believe. That doesn't mean we may go about our lives carefree and violating God's laws. His forgiveness is guaranteed.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X3wXnkbLX9E>



## March 17 25<sup>th</sup> Day of Lent

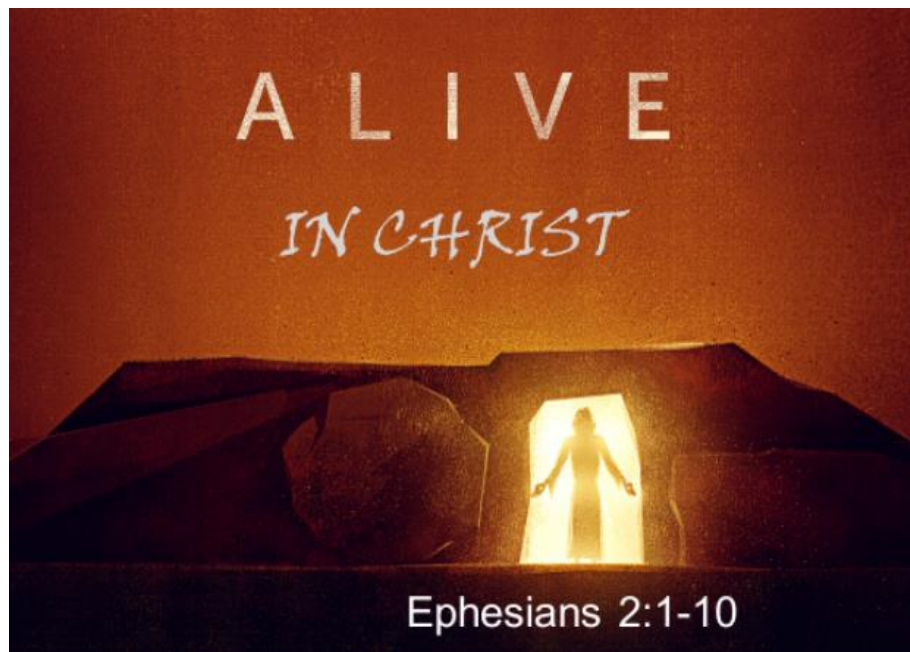
**Ephesians 2:3 “All of you used to do whatever felt good and whatever you thought you wanted so that you were children headed for punishment just like everyone else.”**

The office bench. Oh, how I hated it when the office bench was filled with middle school miscreants. There they waited to see one of the administrators who would adjudicate their case and hand out their punishment. Such a waste of learning time! Not only was the class disrupted when the teacher dealt with the student, but when the situation dictated it, another student’s learning time was interrupted to deliver the office referral when the misbehaving student couldn’t be trusted. In extreme cases, an attendance officer or SRO had to be called to escort the student. Added to missed class time for the student was the possibility the student wouldn’t return quickly; instead, they might be assigned to in-school suspension or out-of-school suspension. There was even a negotiated policy that allowed teachers the right to decline accepting the student back into the classroom for 24 hours.

Paul admonishes the people at Ephesus, warning them that past behaviors would not be tolerated. Followers were encouraged to turn away from frivolous and sinful behaviors. By doing so, they would gain God’s grace.

Are we spending time on God’s bench?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vD8FzwdlXg>



**March 18 26<sup>th</sup> Day of Lent**

**John 3:14 “Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so must the Human One be lifted up so that everyone who believes in Him will have eternal life.”**

Five days ago, the lectionary included the story of Moses from the Book of Numbers. In that account, God instructed Moses to fashion a bronze snake and hold it up on a pole. Those who had been bitten by snakes (those who had sinned) were brought back to life. No requests for clemency were needed. No judgments were overturned. A simple acknowledgement of God was all that was needed. Now, John writes recalling what God did for Moses and the Israelites, noting that Jesus will be lifted up to save believers from eternal damnation and bring them into an eternal life. Nothing more, nothing less. A simple recognition and admission that Jesus is Savior will suffice.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JbO7dMjfz4w>

“Whosoever  
believeth in Him...”  
John 3:14-21



## March 19 27<sup>th</sup> Day of Lent

**Jeremiah 31:34** “They will no longer need to teach each other to say, ‘Know the Lord,’ because they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord.”

On a wall in my office hangs a large, red felt banner. The banner is covered with nametags collected from years of attending meetings, conferences, and other events. There are few places that don't issue nametags for participants. Some of the collection are work nametags from the past, for to enter into school buildings or interact with others from participating organizations, it is necessary to not only wear one's name but also who is being represented. While work-related places require nametags and one wouldn't dream of not having one displayed, there are those places where folks just don't like to wear them...like at church.

So the question becomes: Would God need a nametag? Is God so well-known that a nametag wouldn't be needed? Foolish questions you say?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MISl3lVJ MI>



## March 20 28<sup>th</sup> Day of Lent

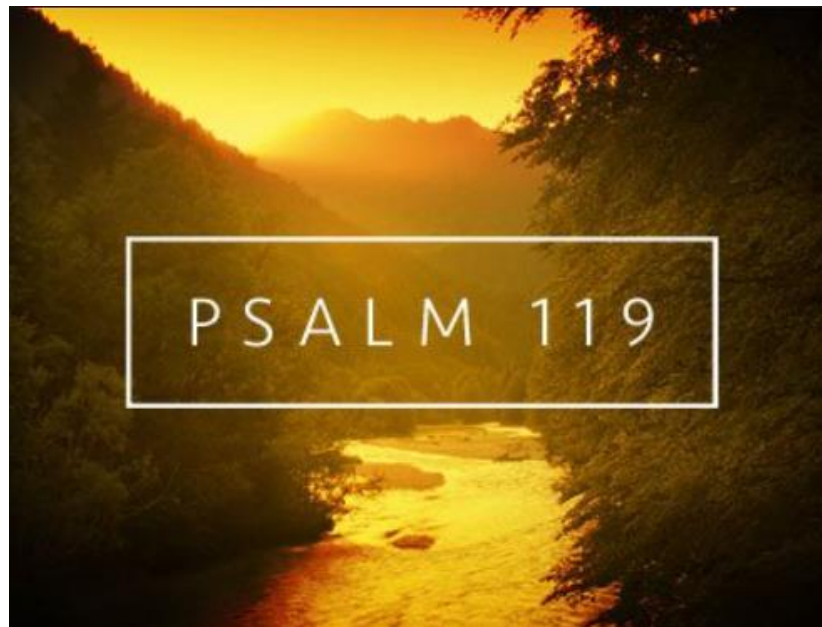
### Psalm 119:16 “I will not forget what You have said.”

A few years ago, I participated in a research study at the KU Alzheimer’s Center. The study’s purpose was to determine whether there was any connection between exercise and memory. Those in the experimental group were provided a one-year membership to the YMCA and their workouts were tracked. Those in the control group were encouraged to continue any level they maintained of physical exercise. Both groups were tested using cognitive assessments at the beginning and at the end of the year to determine whether there were any differences. I was in the control group and did exhibit some increases in the pre- post-assessments; however, those increases were likely due to test-retest familiarity. Later, I was accepted into another Alzheimer’s study looking at the amyloid growth in the brain that is believed to cause memory loss. Prior to CT scan and MRI technology, the only method for determining the presence of amyloids in the brain was performed post-mortem.

This one verse from a very long Psalm pledges that the Psalmist promises to follow, to respect, to revere the Word of God. The Psalmist promises to be steadfast and fixed on God’s commandments. Above all, the Psalmist promises to not forget.

We should not forget.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BID7tswLDNs>



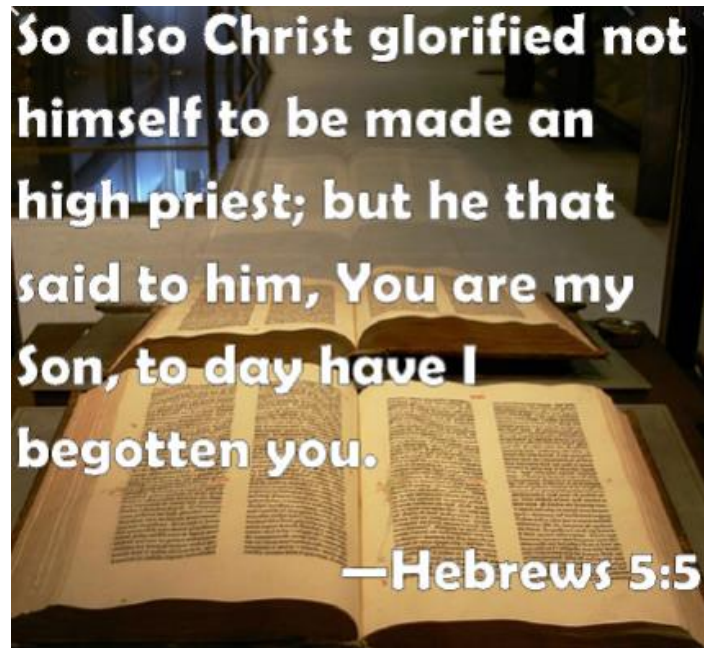
**March 22 29<sup>th</sup> Day of Lent**

**Hebrews 5:5 “In the same way Christ also didn’t promote himself to become high priest.”**

As the Christian church of Christ formed and was developed, the disciples went out to tell the Good News. They had been selected by Jesus and, each in their own way, had been transformed from their former selves to become ministers. The calling they received has held true down through the ages. Ministers obtain their own credentials through degree programs, ordination, and service; however, they all hold one common bond: a calling.

Jesus met the qualifications of a high priest, not because He decided it would be a goal He wished to pursue; rather, He was promoted by God, called to be the Savior of all humankind. His mission continues.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EcXOkht8w7c>



**March 23 30<sup>th</sup> Day of Lent**

**John 12:21 “Sir, we want to see Jesus.”**

Today, we will let the beautiful voice of Noel Richards provide inspiration to guide your day.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R4NJ7cu3avo>





## March 24 31<sup>st</sup> Day of Lent

### Isaiah 7:14 “...and she will name Him Immanuel.”

Hubert Blaine Wolfeschlegelsteinhausenbergerdorff, Sr. How’s that for a name? A German-born Philadelphia typesetter, he’s in the books as the longest personal name. As might be expected, there are always contenders for the Guinness Book of World Records. Saddling a young child with a name almost impossible to spell or pronounce doesn’t seem at all fair.

Jesus was given many names. His mother, following the directions of the Angel, named Him Immanuel. During and after His life, He was granted many more: Christ, Lord, Master, Logos, Son of God, Son of man, YHWH, Yahweh, Jesu, Messiah, Kyrios, Rabbi, Savior, Son of David, Lamb of God, Light of the World, King of the Jews, Rabboni, Chosen One, Faithful and True, and Alpha and Omega.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kunl36AcFgA>



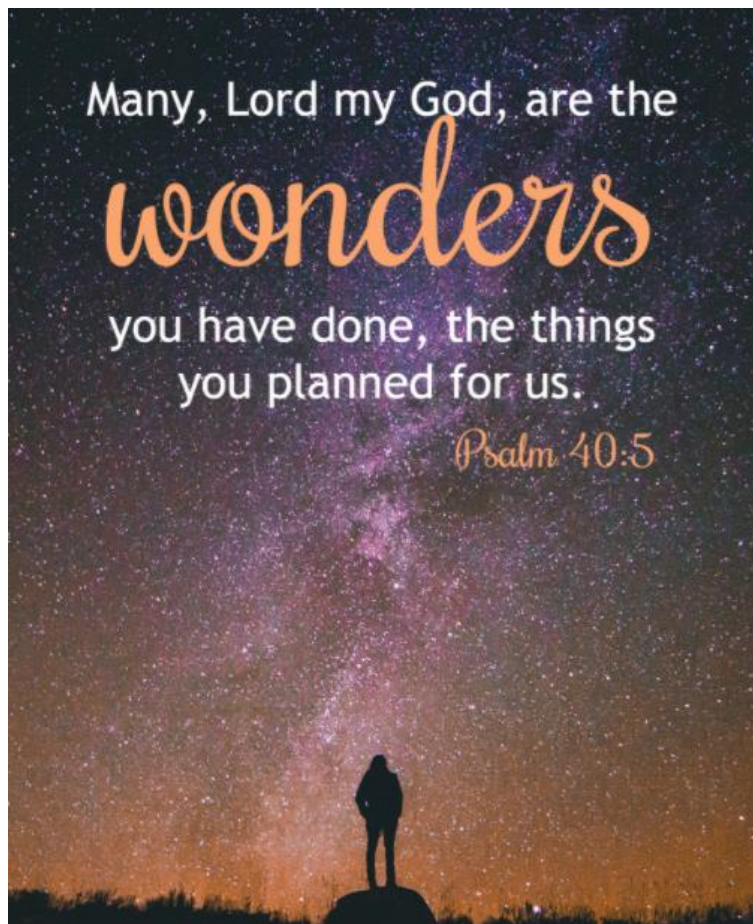
**March 25 32<sup>nd</sup> Day of Lent**

**Psalm 40:5 “You, Lord my God! You’ve done so many things – Your wonderful deeds and Your plans for us – no one can compare with You!”**

Rotary Youth Exchange offers opportunities for young people to experience life in another country. District 5710 in eastern Kansas sponsors youth through their clubs who travel to live in homes in Europe and South America. In exchange, families in the District host young people from France, Germany, Denmark, Brazil, and others. Both outbound and incoming youth attend schools alongside their host country peers. Prior to sending outbound youth to live for a year in another country, extensive applications are written, referral letters are collected, and interviews conducted. Applicants do their best to convince reviewers that they will be excellent candidates for exchange. Academic standings, extracurricular activities participation, friendships, and family support are listed and explained, painting each applicant as a successful, well-rounded individual.

The Lord God is supreme. No one can even come within a fraction of God’s accomplishments. We praise God and celebrate all of the Lord’s works.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=26RFQqFMI3Q>



**March 26 33<sup>rd</sup> Day of Lent**

**Hebrews 4:4 “...because it’s impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.”**

I was so embarrassed. A few years ago (when restaurants were open without concerns), a man at a nearby table began shouting at the waiter. “Take it away!” His meal had been brought to him and set down before him. Apparently, the steak wasn’t prepared to his liking. Overcooked? Not cooked enough? Too much fat? It was apparent the steak didn’t meet his expectations which, of course, was his right; however, few of us would have raised such a stink that would disrupt the peace of those around him. A simple and quiet conversation with the waiter would have sufficed.

Before Jesus came, the practice of blood sacrifices was common. All kinds of animals, large and small, were laid before the knife. Jesus became angry and drove those who were selling animals for sacrifice from the temple. Regardless of their beliefs and longstanding traditions, animal sacrifice did nothing to wipe away sins. Only the sacrifice Jesus made of Himself on the cross would do that. He died to take away our sins.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WRDIO\\_N\\_HVo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WRDIO_N_HVo)



**March 27 34<sup>th</sup> Day of Lent**

**Luke 1:37 “Nothing is impossible for God.”**

Nearly a year since Lent 2019 and so much has changed. Illness, suffering, death...it's almost unimaginable. While reviewing what I had written for this piece of scripture then, I wondered about our ability to stay the faith course. If nothing is impossible for God, then why are we suffering so? Have we displeased Him so much that He is sitting this one out, letting a virus ravage the world's population? Where is the awesomeness in that?

As believers in the One True God, never losing faith, never giving in to the temptation to blame God for ignoring us, we continue to praise Him.

This song still rings true.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p-6YdT1DEO8>



## March 29 35<sup>th</sup> Day of Lent

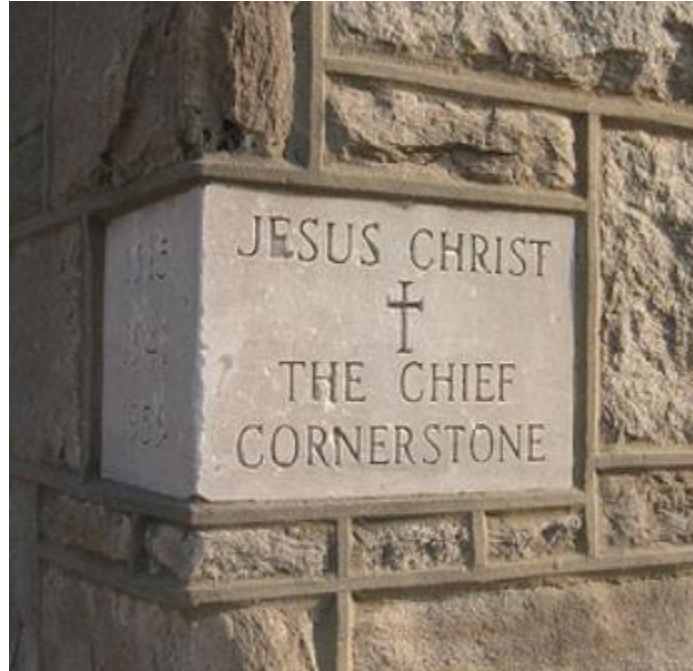
### Psalm 118:22 “The stone rejected by the builders is now the main foundation stone!”

Most of us have those collections of items from earlier times in our lives. Cedar chests filled with wedding dresses, trunks that contain baptismal gowns, even yellowing photo albums of our childhood. Mine is a tin can sealed tightly that holds treasures my mother put into the 5-gallon container. The outside has become rusted, but the inside is as clean as the day she lovingly and thoughtfully placed there...a toddler outfit that also appears in one of those black-and-white photo album snapshots, a double holster six-shooter cowboy gun set, an infant bib. There was a sailor’s hat made of wool on which the words “U.S. Navy” was written. The hat more recently was handed down to a grandson to enhance the nautical theme of his nursery.

Cornerstones are often receptacles of important items. Most often, newspapers of the day, recordings of important events, and memorabilia that mark the time the container was sealed. More importantly, the cornerstone itself formed the underpinning for the rest of the building. This scripture passage notes that Jesus will be rejected by the pharisees, but will become the foundation upon His church will be built.

When I look through the items in my tin can, I wonder what else could have been included that wasn’t and why might those items have been rejected? More importantly, may any of them have become a cherished and revered part of my adult life?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dcimzo-RITM>



**March 30 36<sup>th</sup> Day of Lent**

**Psalm 118:1-2 “Give thanks to the Lord because He is good, because His faithful love lasts forever.”**

Faithful – Steadfast in allegiance; firm in adherence to promises, given with strong assurance

Love – Strong affection; affection based on admiration, warm attachment

Lasts – To continue in time, to remain unimpaired, to continue to live

Forever – For a limitless time, at all times, excessively long

Give thanks!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BcEr9OkFP-s>



## March 31 37<sup>th</sup> Day of Lent

**Mark 11:4 “They went and found a colt tied to a gate outside on a street, and they untied it.”**

For those of us who are city dwellers, colts, donkeys, and burros are all the same. But they are not. Colts are, by definition, a young horse likely not broken for riding or saddling or packing. One of the choices our scout group was given at the Philmont Scout Reservation in New Mexico was to spend a day or two on the trail with pack burros. After those days were past, most of us were determined that we would never use burros again as they were obstinate, nasty, and seemed to be lazy. Only a few years later, our group spent five days on horseback outside Aspen, Colorado. The horses were trained to follow along with their riders, but some had developed habits that weren't kind to their riders.

So, along comes Jesus needing a ride into Jerusalem. He directed his disciples to bring a colt, a young, untrained animal that would usually be expected to object to His presence on its back. That didn't happen, though. The colt accepted the clothing thrown on its back and then accepted Jesus on its back. A young colt, if a member of the horse family and a yearling, may have had difficulty supporting a person of 150 pounds. This colt didn't have trouble. Instead, Jesus rode the animal into Jerusalem and may have traveled at least a few miles. Some accounts attribute the animal to being a donkey while this Bible version specifies that it was a colt. If it was a donkey, especially like those with which we had experience, the animal would have walked very slowly, stopping when it wanted to stop. Jesus didn't seem to experience these problems. Of course, we didn't have the power of the Son of God.

In place of music today, watch this dramatization.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pB3JKyoYOh8>

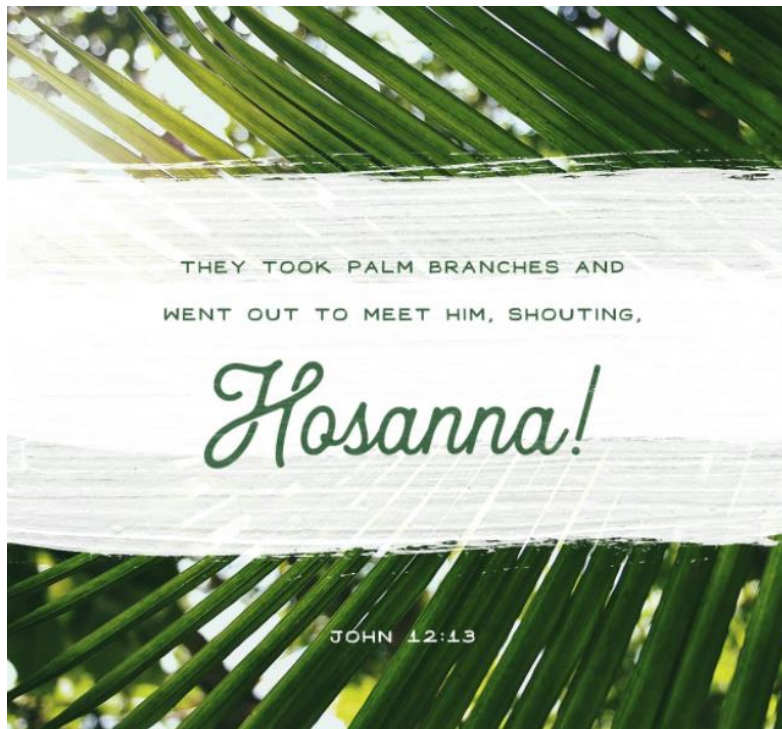


## April 1 38<sup>th</sup> Day of Lent

**John 12:13 They took palm branches and went out to meet Him.”**

Why palm branches? You may know that these were ancient symbols of victory. Long before most could read or write, symbols were used to signify a number of thoughts and ideas. Some have transcended the ages and have been used in recent times. The pagan symbol for “heavenly power” is now the logo of the Mitsubishi Automotive Company. A five-point star originated as a Celtic symbol for “witches foot.” Many ancient symbols found their origin in Roman times. A flaming torch has long been used in Olympic messages. The laurel wreath placed on a victor’s head in ancient competition denoted the winner. The palm branch was a natural since it was readily available to the people. Waving them as Jesus passed by was a clear sign that the Messiah had arrived.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= OfPOaf-kxc>





**April 2 39<sup>th</sup> Day of Lent**

**Isaiah 50:4 “The Lord gave me an educated tongue to know how to respond to the weary with a word that will awaken them in the morning.”**

Robert Greenleaf is credited with coining the phrase “servant leadership,” a concept that has made its way through business organizations and university classrooms. The thought is that those who lead, lead best when they share responsibilities with those who follow them, taking care to give credit where it is due and trusting others to work toward common goals. Critics speculate that servant leaders are weak. Critics claim that the power of the leader is diminished and fails to recognize that people are inherently lazy. Critics note that servant leaders go unnoticed and, therefore, don’t get promoted.

The ultimate model of servant leadership is Jesus. Reactions from His followers when He chose to wash their feet demonstrated that theirs was not a culture of such management. Jesus was, by His own account, a teacher, one who learned from God. We want to be taught by the best, by those who know their subjects thoroughly. Jesus knew the Old Testament and was able to cite from those writings. His servant leadership was the hallmark of His mission on Earth.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kdmgpMfnjdU>



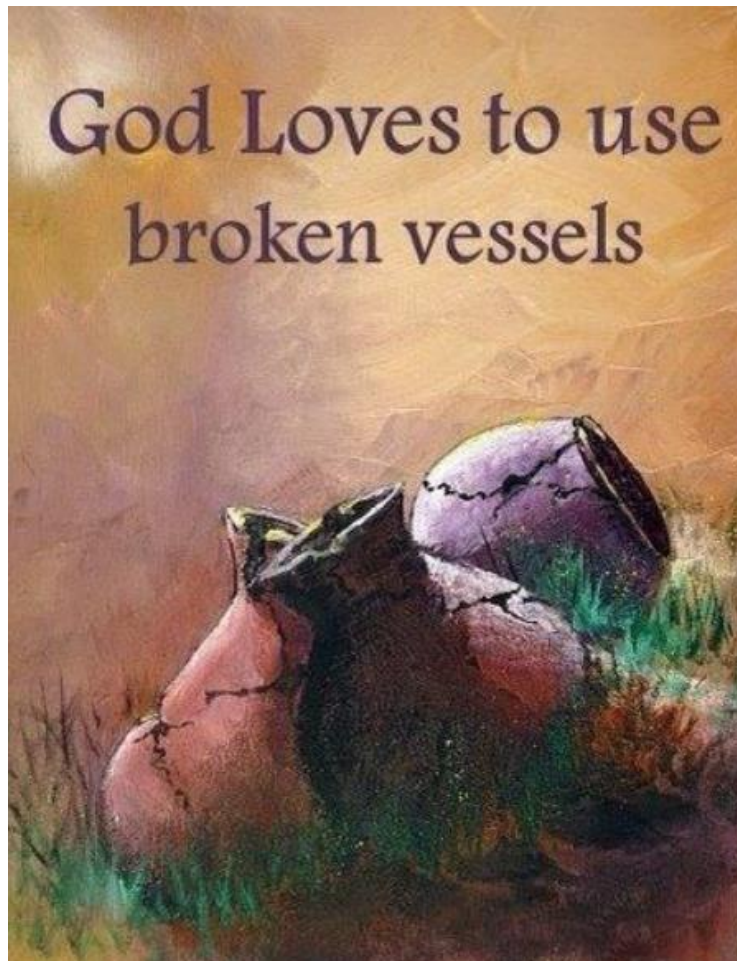
### April 3 40<sup>th</sup> and Final Day of Lent

**Psalm 31:12 “...I am like a piece of pottery, destroyed.”**

Kintsugi is a Japanese art form in which broken pieces of pottery, ceramics, or lacquerware are pieced together using a glue-like substance with a gold base, thus forming seams in the piece that glowed with brilliance. The practice dates back to the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

Psalmist David considers himself fully spent, completely unable to go on. As a precursor to his descendant Jesus who was crucified on the cross, David looks upon his impending death as the end. Jesus was different, though. Destroyed, He is about to be raised from the dead. His ascension will bring about a new form of His being. His garments will shine and His face will glow. He has not been destroyed.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ILehPZnjfM>



## April 4 Easter

**Matthew 28:6** “He isn’t here, because He’s been raised from the dead, just as He said.”

On this day when we are filled with joy as we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, it may be a bit morbid to consider the subject of caskets. But it’s life for many, especially in these dire times of a pandemic. Back in the day when my employer provided families with funeral services, I would often move caskets from storage into the viewing room where they could be considered for their loved one. Then and now, caskets are fairly standard with a double-hinged lid that covers the lower part of the body while the upper portion can be seen during services if desired. When the patriarch of the company passed on, a special casket was chosen for him that gave a full view with a glass lid in addition to the single piece lid. There was no doubt about the presence of the body as it was fully exposed.

At His resurrection, Jesus left the tomb and began the process that would culminate in His ascension to Heaven. His mother Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, would have nothing to do without a body. Imagine their shock and dismay! They were unable to understand what was taking place, even with the explanation provided by an angel. The dead body of Christ, marked by His crucifixion on the cross, was no longer lying in repose inside the tomb. Jesus was risen. He was risen indeed!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9ffK6XCbgEY>

